



128 Dorrance Street, Suite 400  
Providence, RI 02903  
Phone: (401) 831-7171  
Fax: (401) 831-7175  
[www.riaclu.org](http://www.riaclu.org)  
[info@riaclu.org](mailto:info@riaclu.org)

**TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF 21 – H 5257  
AN ACT RELATING TO PROPERTY –  
RHODE ISLAND FAIR HOUSING PRACTICES ACT  
FEBRUARY 11, 2021**

The ACLU of Rhode Island is appreciative of the opportunity to voice our strong support for this piece of legislation which would prevent landlords from denying a potential tenant's housing application on the basis of their source of income.

Research conducted by Southcoast Fair Housing asks a pivotal question about income: "A dollar is a dollar, no matter where it comes from – right?" As instinctive as the notion may be that income itself is free from bias, Rhode Islanders with non-traditional income sources find themselves at a disadvantage in a housing market that prioritizes pay stubs over Social Security or rental assistance vouchers.

It is time to protect these residents, many of whom are already members of low-income or marginalized communities, from enduring further difficulties in their search for safe and healthy housing. The financial qualification of a tenant should be limited to whether they can reliably and consistently make rent or not, not whether their rent money is coming from a private employer or from subsidy programs.

We are glad to see that such an important bill is before this committee today, and we urge its swift passage.

Thank you for your consideration.